

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name: Building of a new bridge across a perennial stream identified as Butte Creek on the North Four Buttes road in Daniels County.

Proposed Implementation Date: Spring of 2017

Proponent: Montana Department of Transportation, 2701 Prospect Avenue, PO Box 201001, Helena Montana, 59620-1001

Type and Purpose of Action: The Montana Department of Transportation has made a Right-of-Way Easement application to replace an existing bridge on the North Four Buttes road in Daniels County. This project will address substandard bridge and structural conditions and potential safety issues in order to provide a bridge that facilitates safe, comfortable and efficient movement of traffic and improves regional mobility. The State of Montana Lands that will be impacted by the right-of-way easement is a total of 2.58 acres. The areas of impact are native rangelands.

Location: NE4SE4, Sec.31 Twp. 36N Rge. 47E, NW4SW4, Sec. 32 Twp. 36N Rge. 47E

County: Daniels

I. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED: Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project.

Montana Department of Transportation has made a Right-of-Way easement application to use 2.58 acres of State land for new bridge construction. The Montana Department of Transportation has conducted public hearings with those parties involved in Daniels County. The surface lessee of the State land has been contacted and is aware of the impacts to his lease hold interest. Mitigation measures will be implemented to alleviate impacts to the lessees lease hold interest.

2. OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS NEEDED:

The other government agencies with jurisdiction for this project are the United States Fish & Wildlife Service, Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks, Montanan Department of Environmental Quality, United States Army Corp. of Engineers, United States Environmental Protection Agency, and Daniels County Commissioners. There may be other State or Federal agencies that may be involved with this project, that the writer of this document is not aware of.

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

Action Alternative: Grant a Right-of-Way Easement to Montana Department of

	<p>Transportation use 2.58 acres of State land for new bridge construction.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Deny a Right of Way Easement to Montana Department of Transportation to use 2.58 acres of State land for new bridge construction.</p>
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II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	
RESOURCE	POTENTIAL IMPACTS
<p>4. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE: Are fragile, compactible or unstable soils present? Are there unusual geologic features? Are there special reclamation considerations?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: This type of project will impact the silty, sandy and clay loam soils on the State land. The impacts will be permanent on those areas that will be covered with bridge material. The areas that are disturbed and not covered with bridge material will be reclaimed under a reclamation plan. Those soils that are reclaimed will produce native vegetation and become a part of the roadway ditches. Montana Department of Transportation road side reclamation plans are developed with native plant species.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to the soils on the State land under this alternative.</p>
<p>5. WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION: Are important surface or groundwater resources present? Is there potential for violation of ambient water quality standards, drinking water maximum contaminant levels, or degradation of water quality?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The project will have minimal impacts on the water quality, quantity and distribution associated with these tracts of state land. The project area has the perennial stream identified as Butte Creek that has an existing bridge that will be replaced. The construction of a new bridge will have minimal impacts to water quality on Butte Creek. It is expected that some dirt material will be pushed into Butte Creek during new bridge construction. This impact is unavoidable during bridge construction and impacts to water quality will be at the construction site.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be</p>

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	no impacts to water resources under this alternative.
6. AIR QUALITY: Will pollutants or particulate be produced? Is the project influenced by air quality regulations or zones (Class I airshed)?	<p>Action Alternative: The project will have minimal impacts on the air quality of the land involved with the project. The project will produce some dirt particles to become air borne from the new bridge construction by heavy equipment. The bridge construction equipment will be moving various amounts of overburden soils moved and replaced along bridge right of way. There will be extensive equipment use at the bridge site. There will also be equipment use on the county road near the new bridge construction site.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to the air quality under this alternative.</p>
7. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY: Will vegetative communities be permanently altered? Are any rare plants or cover types present?	<p>Action Alternative: A portion of the right of way used for the new bridge construction will be native rangeland. The new bridge construction will destroy the native plant communities. The area next to the bridge construction site will have topsoil replaced and the area will be reclaimed with native vegetation.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to the vegetation under this alternative.</p>
8. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS: Is there substantial use of the area by important wildlife, birds or fish?	<p>Action Alternative: This type of activity will disturb the habitat types on the State land. The area of impact is small in scope and there will be minimal impacts to the wildlife and upland bird resources of the area. The native rangeland tract has a very minimal population of Silver sagebrush plants. The State land is not part of identified areas containing known sage grouse leks. Some of the wildlife that inhabits this area, whitetail deer, bald and golden eagles, sharptail grouse, pheasant, song birds etc. The loss of</p>

II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	
	<p>habitat on the State land will have minimal impacts to wildlife and bird species. Butte Creek contains various types of minnow species of fish. There will be a variety limit impact to water habitat at the bridge construction site.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to the wildlife habitat resources associated with the land under this alternative.</p>
<p>9. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES: Are any federally listed threatened or endangered species or identified habitat present? Any wetlands? Sensitive Species or Species of special concern?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The project area contains no known unique, endangered, fragile or limited environmental resources. The area of impact contains no known threatened or endangered species. The native range area of impact contains some habitat resources for wildlife, upland birds and song birds. The new bridge construction will have minimal impacts to the habitat resources associated with the native rangeland. The loss of habitat on the State land will be less than 3 acres.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to the environmental resources under this alternative.</p>
<p>10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES: Are any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources present?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: There are no known historical or archaeological sites on or near the area to be impacted by the road way construction. Portions of the state land were inspected by Matt Poole, Unit Manager, Glasgow Unit Office, Department of Natural Resources and Conservation. The other portion of the right of way easement application area was inspected by Mark Kloker, (former) Land Use Specialist, Glasgow Unit Office, Department of Natural Resources and Conservation.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to historical or archaeological sites under this alternative.</p>
<p>11. AESTHETICS: Is the project on a prominent topographic feature?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The project site is located on county road identified</p>

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Will it be visible from populated or scenic areas? Will there be excessive noise or light?	<p>as North Four Buttes road. The bridge construction will be visible to the general public. Vehicle traffic on North Four Buttes road will see construction with operation of heavy equipment and large trucks. The construction equipment will emit loud noise and cause dirt particles to become airborne. The bridge construction will have minimal impacts to the aesthetic values associated with the state land.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to the aesthetics associated with the land under this project.</p>
12. DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AIR OR ENERGY: Will the project use resources that are limited in the area? Are there other activities nearby that will affect the project?	<p>Action Alternative: The use of the State land for new bridge construction will place no demands on environmental resources of land, water, air or energy.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to the environmental resources of land, water, air or energy under this alternative.</p>
13. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PERTINENT TO THE AREA: Are there other studies, plans or projects on this tract?	<p>Action Alternative: The construction of a new bridge will not impact other projects or plans that may be occurring on the state land.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to the plans, studies or other projects on the land under this alternative.</p>

III. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION	
RESOURCE	POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES
14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY: Will this project add to health and safety risks in the area?	Action Alternative; The construction of a new bridge has various types of human health and safety risks. The human health and safety risks are identified as occupational hazards by employee and employer. The general public traversing the construction

	<p>zone will be warned. Road signs will inform the public of a construction zone area. The bridge construction will have minimal human health and safety risks for the general public.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to human health or safety under this alternative.</p>
<p>15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION: Will the project add to or alter these activities?</p>	<p>Action alternative: The new bridge construction will have minimal impact to the agricultural activities that are occurring on the land. The current agriculture activities occurring on the two State land tracts are livestock grazing. Temporary and new fences will be built by the bridge construction company along the edge of the State land right of way. Livestock on the State land would not be allowed to access the bridge construction site.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to the agricultural activities under this alternative.</p>
<p>16. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT: Will the project create, move or eliminate jobs? If so, estimated number.</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The project may create some local jobs for the new bridge construction. Those jobs would be for various activities, excluding heavy equipment operation that requires operator licensing.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to the quantity and distribution of employment under this alternative.</p>
<p>17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES: Will the project create or eliminate tax revenue?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The project will not create additional tax revenue for Daniels county. The writer of this document is not aware of taxes levied for new bridge construction on the local populace.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to the local and state tax base under this alternative.</p>
<p>18. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES: Will substantial traffic be added to existing roads? Will other services (fire protection, police,</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The project will place no demands for government services. The existing Four Buttes North road will see no additional</p>

schools, etc) be needed?	<p>traffic other than construction workers going to the bridge construction site.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts for government services under this alternative.</p>
19. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS: Are there State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, etc. zoning or management plans in effect?	<p>Action Alternative: The project will not impact locally adopted environmental plans and goals.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to locally adopted environmental plans and goals under this alternative.</p>
20. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES: Are wilderness or recreational areas nearby or accessed through this tract? Is there recreational potential within the tract?	<p>Action Alternative: The project will not impact the hunting or hiking recreational values associated with the State land. There will also be no impacts to the surrounding deeded lands near the bridge construction zone.</p> <p>No Action Alternative; There would be no impacts to the hunting recreational values associated with the land under this alternative.</p>
21. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING: Will the project add to the population and require additional housing?	<p>Action Alternative: The project will not impact the density and distribution of the population and housing near this rural area.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to the density and distribution of the population and housing under this alternative.</p>
22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES: Is some disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities possible?	<p>Action Alternative: The project will not impact the social structures of the local communities. There will be some disruption for the town's people of the Four Buttes community. The bridge construction will disrupt traffic entering and leaving the North Four Buttes road.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to the social structures under this alternative.</p>
23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY: Will the action cause a shift in	<p>Action Alternative: The project will not impact the cultural uniqueness and</p>

some unique quality of the area?	diversity of the State land. No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to the cultural uniqueness and diversity under this alternative.
24. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:	Action Alternative: The project may provide some economic benefit to the local community businesses. The benefits would be the sale of supply products to the company that will be doing the bridge construction. No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to the social and economic circumstances under this alternative.

EA Checklist Prepared By: Randy Dirkson, Land Use Specialist Date: 10-19-2016

IV. FINDING	
25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:	Action Alternative
26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:	After reviewing both Mr. Dirkson's and MDOT's environmental assessments, I anticipate there will be no significant impacts from the proposed action.
27. Need for Further Environmental Analysis: <input type="checkbox"/> EIS <input type="checkbox"/> More Detailed EA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Further Analysis	

EA Checklist Approved By: Matthew Poole Glasgow Unit Manager
Name Title
s/Matthew Poole\s Date: October 20, 2016
Signature

